MARVEL

019

GILLEN
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STAR WARS™

DOCTOR APHRA

REMASTERED
Part VI

It is a time of instability in the galaxy as rebel forces battle the Galactic Empire for freedom. But instability can lead to opportunity for those with the know-how and lack of scruples to let them take advantage of it.

Rogue archaeologist Doctor Chelli Aphra would typically be one such individual. But she's been blackmailed into the servitude of the psychotic droid crime lord Triple-Zero--most recently to steal his old memories from the Tarkin Initiative.

Aphra had a plan to board the Imperial ship Hivebase-1 with rebel leader Hera Syndulla held hostage, but everything went wrong. Now at the desired Tarkin Initiative, can the Doctor and her crew survive this encounter and escape with what they came for?

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Hivebase-1 Data Core.
ALL RIGHT, GENERAL SYNDULLA, FAIR'S FAIR.
I'M PREPARED TO ADMIT THAT ABDUCTING YOU AND PUTTING A BOW ON YOUR HEAD MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE--IMPOLITE.
BUT--C'MON--YOU GOTTA LOOK FOR THE SMART PLAY.
HERE, TAKE THIS.
SEE, THOSE ARE HUTT CLONE-TROOPERS WITH SUPERCHARGED CARBINES. YOU'LL GET ONE SAVE OUTTA ME AS A HUMAN SHIELD--TOPS.
BUT IF YOU'D JUST AGREE TO--HUH, GOOD SHOT--COVER ME A SEC, YOU'LL SOON SEE...
KILL THEM! KILL THEM ALL!
...I'VE GOT THIS WHOLE THING UNDER CONTROL.
HOW IS THIS UNDER CONTROL?!
WE'RE OUTNUMBERED, POSLA'S TOO TRAUMATIZED TO FIGHT AND THE IMPERIAL IN THE TECHNOCOFFIN SAID IT'D TAKE HOURS TO FIND THE RIGHT DATA IN A CORE THIS BIG.
HE ALSO SAID I'D BE A FOOL TO EVEN TRY.
SO?
SO--SINCE I'M NOT A FOOL--

"--I FIGURED I'D JUST STEAL *ALL* THE DATA INSTEAD."

--SOMEONE'S DEPLOYING THE TRACTOR BEAM--

--UNAUTHORIZED SIGNALS TO THE LAUNCH BAYS! I-IT'S THE X-WINGS! THEY'RE ALL AUTO-SCRAMBLING--

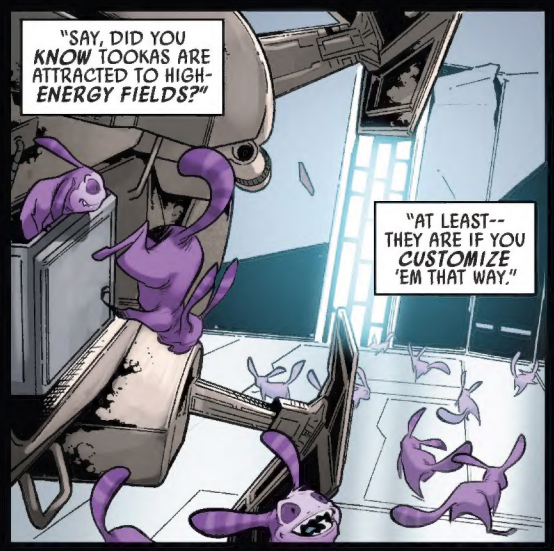
--HAVEN'T DETACHED THEIR MOORING CABLES! REPEAT, THEY HAVEN'T DETACHED TH--

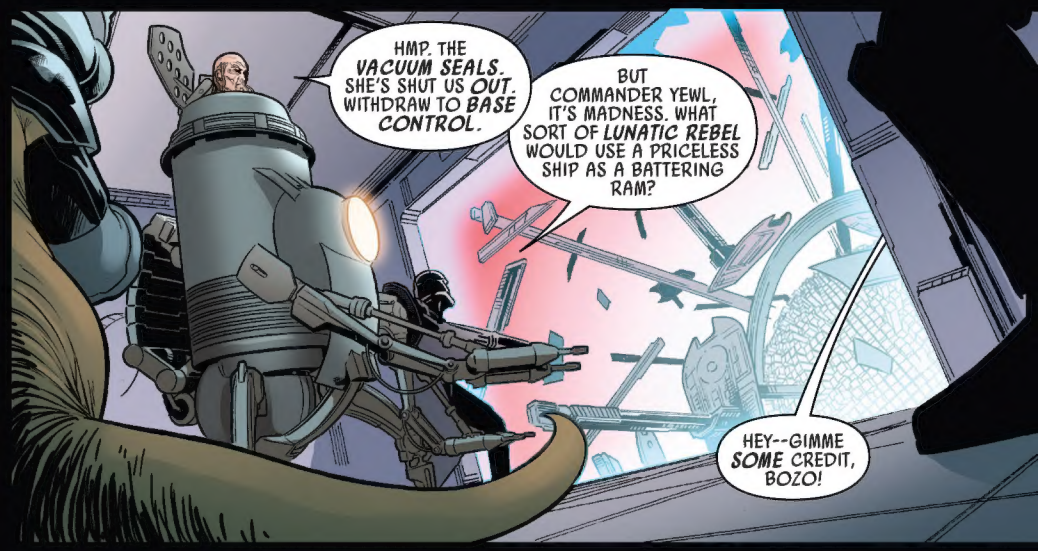
WHO'S *DOING* THIS?!

TRADE FEDERATION LUCREHULK-- PLENTY BIG ENOUGH TO SHOULDER-BARGE ITS WAY THROUGH SOME EXPLODO JELLYFISH. PACKS A *LOOOT* OF *PULL*, TOO.

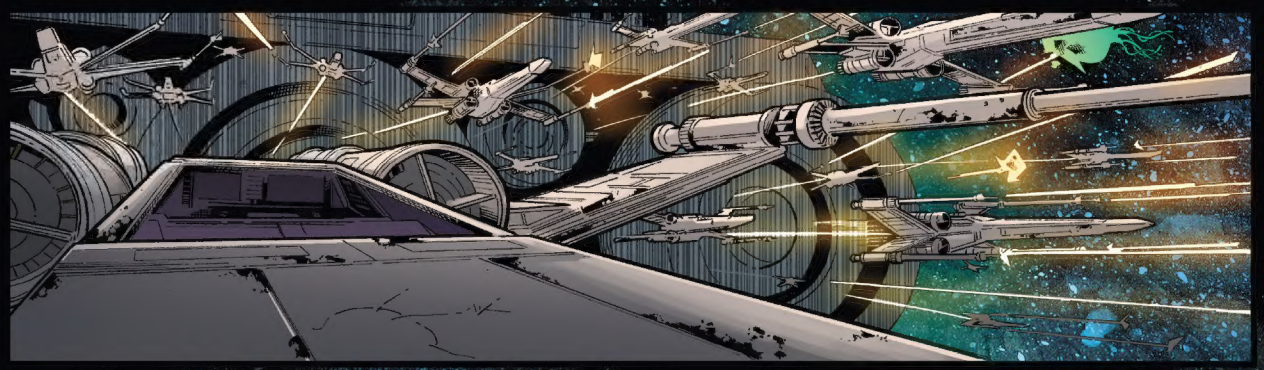
OH NO. THE...THE DROID *CONTROL CORE!*

"YOU *HIJACKED IT* WHILE YOU WERE ABOARD..."



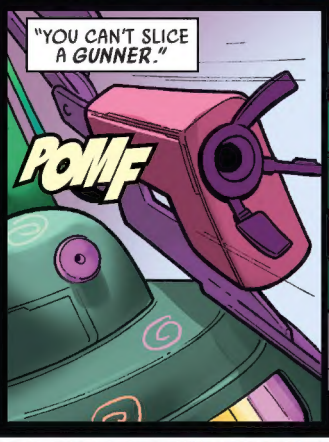


I'M USING IT AS A GETAWAY RIDE, TOO.

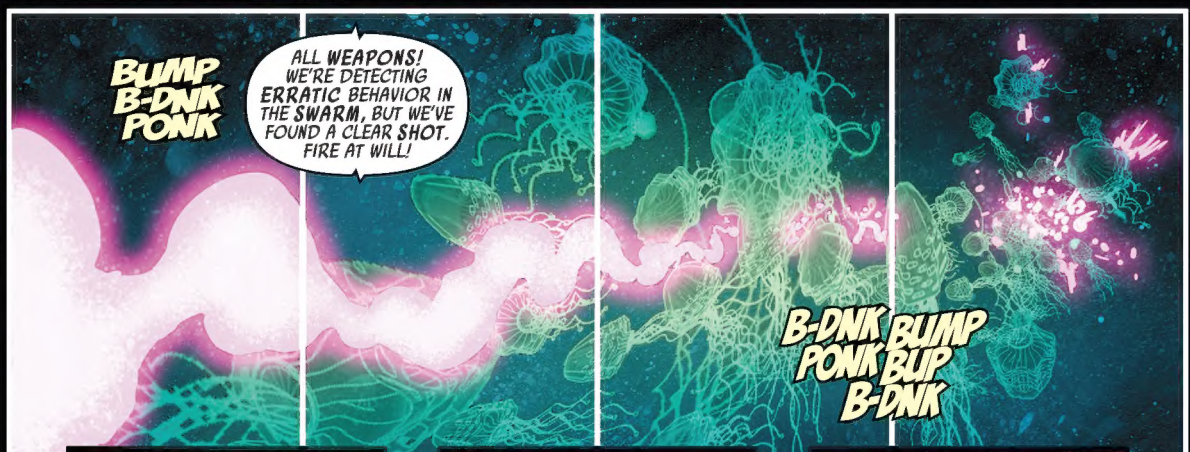


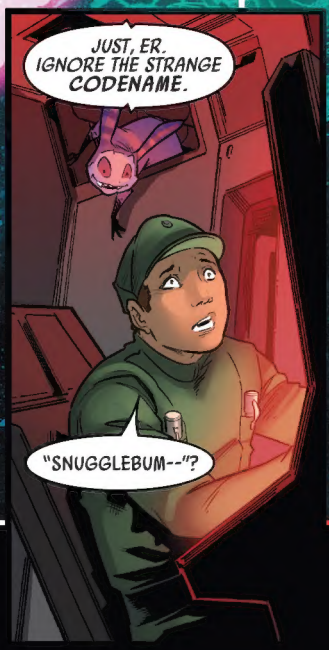
SIR, THE REBEL SHIP IS ESCA--
NOT FOR LONG. DIVERT ALL REMAINING POWER TO WEAPONS. PLOT A FIRING SOLUTION THROUGH THE SCARAPHYTE SWARM.
"BETTER THE DATA CORE BE DESTROYED THAN THE REBELS HAVE IT."
VVPP
BEHOLD IN AWE FOR I LIVE I GIVE I AM THE BEST AT PLAYING DEAD YES
LIKE SOME LIFELESS CHASSIS SOME MERE MACHINE GREAT DEK-NIL LAY I LAY OHHH CONTEMPLATING THE COLORS IN A BEAM OF MUSIC
LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
I LOVE BEING ME
TNK
VVVP
CLK
WHIR

WEAPONS PRIMED, SIR. CALCULATING TRAJECTORIES TO AVOID THE SWARM.
SIR, THIS IS STRANGE... I THINK SOMEONE'S TAMPERED WITH THE REGISTRY. ALL THE FIRING PATTERNS HAVE NEW NAMES.
HMF. DOESN'T MATTER. THE CANNONS ARE MANUALLY CALIBRATED.


"YOU CAN'T SLICE A GUNNER."
POMF

PONK
WOBBLING WOBBLING OHHH OHH GODS ARE BUT VIBRATIONS IN THE MUSIC OF TIME


BUMP B-DNK PONK
ALL WEAPONS! WE'RE DETECTING ERRATIC BEHAVIOR IN THE SWARM, BUT WE'VE FOUND A CLEAR SHOT. FIRE AT WILL!
B-DNK PONK BUMP BUP B-DNK


JUST, ER. IGNORE THE STRANGE CODENAME.
"SNUGGLEBUM--"?

"--OOGIE--"?

--"WOOGIE?"

♫
TAPPATAP TAPPITYTAP

Three Hours Later.
Uncharted Space.
CASE LOG OF LIEUTENANT-INSPECTOR MAGNA TOLVAN:
(AH--CORRECTION: THAT SHOULD BE CAPTAIN-INSPECTOR. STILL GETTING USED TO THAT.)
LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE MAD, BUT...I PULLED THE INFO I NEEDED DURING THE RIDE. IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION, YOU CAN HAVE THE REST.
THE LOSS OF THE R&D CORE IS A GRIEVOUS BLOW TO THE EMPIRE'S ARCHIVES, OF COURSE--
--BUT WE MUST STRIVE TO SEEK LESSONS IN EVERY LOSS.
SEIZE THAT W--
HOLD IT, BINI. HOW COULD YOU HAVE GOTTEN YOUR FILES? WE'VE ONLY BEEN IN TRANSIT THREE HOURS. YEWL SAID IT WOULD TAKE EIGHT, MINIM--
EH.
"YOU GET USED TO BEING UNDERESTIMATED WHEN YOU'RE ME."
THE PARTIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIASCO--THOSE WHO COULD BE RESCUED FROM THE WRECKAGE--WILL BE APPROPRIATELY DISCIPLINED.
IN THIS FASHION, ORDER--AND THE SUPERIORITY OF THE OFFICER CADRE--IS PRESERVED.
IT'S NOT FAIR! IT'S NOT FAIR!

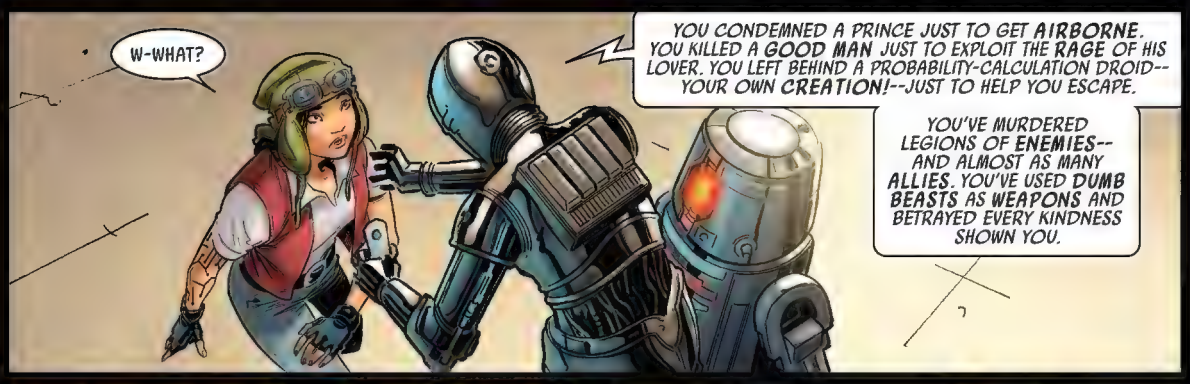
PERMISSION TO SHOOT THE KIDNAPPER, MA'AM. A LOT.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE MUST TAKE HEART FROM WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED OF OUR ADVERSARIES.
...PERMISSION DENIED.
THE REBEL ALLIANCE IS SENTIMENTAL AND LACKING IN TECHNOLOGICAL AMBITION.
EVEN IF THEY HAD THE EXPERTISE TO UNDERSTAND THE DATA THEY'VE STOLEN, IT'S DOUBTFUL THEY WOULD HAVE THE COURAGE TO WEAPONIZE IT.
THE R&D ON THAT THING COULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF THE WAR. WHATEVER ELSE SHE IS, THAT WOMAN DID SOMETHING WE NEVER COULD.
GIVE HER A SHIP. GET HER OUT OF MY SIGHT.
BUT KNOW THIS--
YEAH, YEAH. SHOW YOUR FACE IN THESE PARTS AGAIN, YADDA YADDA.
YOU COMING, SIX?
ACTUALLY, I...THINK I'M GONNA STAY.
THESE REBEL GUYS, THEY...WELL, THEY IMPRESSED ME. NO OFFENSE, DOC, BUT...
...I THINK I NEED TO SPEND SOME TIME AROUND FOLKS WHO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING.

HAPPY ENDING, SIX.
THANKS. I'D WISH YOU THE SAME, BUT...
YEAH...
...I KNOW.
ANYBODY SEEN TAM POSLA?
HERE.
MADAM GENERAL, THIS VILLAIN INSTRUCTED ME TO RESCUE AN INFILTRATOR HIDING IN YOUR AIR DUCTS WHILE SHE DISTRACTED YOU.
POSLA, YOU RAT. WHAT'RE Y--
INSTEAD I HAVE TRANQUILIZED THE INTRUDER. HERE IS HER LOCATION DATA.
"I SUGGEST YOU APPROACH WITH CAUTION."
THIS WOMAN'S ALLIES ARE AS SNEAKY AS SHE IS.
I SHALL BE TERMINATING OUR AFFILIATION AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.
MY BOOT'S GONNA AFFILIATE WITH YOUR BACKSIDE, Y'SANCTIMONIOUS SNITCH.
HNNG! HGGGNN! HGGGNNN!
WAIT-- YOU'RE NOT AN IMPERIAL INFILTRATOR...
YOU'RE... YOU'RE...

TAM POSLA?
TEN-HUT!
OFFICER ON DECK!
AS FOR *MYSELF*...THOUGH I AM ON THE WHOLE CONTENT WITH MY CONDUCT DURING RECENT EXPLOITS--AND BELIEVE MY EVENTUAL PROMOTION TO BE A JUST REWARD--
--I MUST CONCEDE THAT SOME OF MY METHODS MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE...
...*UNORTHODOX.*
TOLVAN?
LIEUTENANT MAGNA TOLVAN?
MMM?

IT'S TIME.
Two Days Later. Nowhere.
I HAVE TO GO.
JOY, W--
NO, SSHH, DON'T WAKE UP. JUST...JUST SLEEP...
NO GOODBYE?
CHELLI LONA APHRA.
DON'T SEARCH FOR IT. DON'T MENTION IT. DON'T EVEN THINK IT. IT'LL GET YOU KILLED, AND...I'D KINDA LIKE IT IF ONE OF US GETS OUTTA THIS ALIVE.
I JUST... I WANTED YOU TO KNOW WHO I REALLY AM.
SO LONG, SIR.
"SUCH A LITTLE THING..."

...AND YET SO DENSE WITH WONDER. MY FIRST MEMORIES. MY CREATION. MY DEBUT MURDER.
PERHAPS EVEN MY PURPOSE.
Son-tuul. Crime Syndicate Audience Chamber.
I...I HOPE IT'S WORTH IT. I HOPE THIS MAKES US ALL SQUARE...
...MASTER.
...
OH. OH, CHELLI. MY DEAR, DEAR CHILD.
DID YOU TRULY BELIEVE... THIS...WAS ALL I WANTED?
...
DAMN YOU, TRIPLE-ZERO.
DO IT, THEN. DO IT, YOU VICIOUS SONUVA--
BUT--MY DEAR! I ALREADY HAVE.


W-WHAT?
YOU CONDEMNED A PRINCE JUST TO GET AIRBORNE. YOU KILLED A GOOD MAN JUST TO EXPLOIT THE RAGE OF HIS LOVER. YOU LEFT BEHIND A PROBABILITY-CALCULATION DROID--YOUR OWN CREATION!--JUST TO HELP YOU ESCAPE.
YOU'VE MURDERED LEGIONS OF ENEMIES--AND ALMOST AS MANY ALLIES. YOU'VE USED DUMB BEASTS AS WEAPONS AND BETRAYED EVERY KINDNESS SHOWN YOU.

YOU HAVE A TALENT, MY DEAR.
AND I KNOW--WE BOTH KNOW--
--YOU ENJOY IT.

YOU DID ALL THIS TO... TO MAKE ME MORE LIKE YOU?
BY THE MAKER, NO! I'M NOT A MONSTER!

I DID IT TO MAKE YOU SEE YOU'RE ALREADY LIKE ME.

N-NO. NO! I'M NOT SICK!
I JUST... I GET THINGS WRONG. I'M SELFISH. I...I USE PEOPLE. BUT...

I DON'T EXPECT TO SLEEP WELL.
EVER.

HM. I SEE. WELL. WELL.
A DISAPPOINTMENT, THEN. OH--BY THE MAKER... IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY.

LOVE IS MURDER.
L--?
SOMEBODY DEACTIVATE HER, PLEASE.

I HAD HOPED, OF COURSE, THAT THE CULMINATION OF MY INVESTIGATION WOULD BE THE RETRIEVAL OF THE STOLEN DATA CORE.
INSTEAD, WE SMASHED A MAJOR CRIME SYNDICATE THAT HAD BEEN TERRORIZING THE OUTER RIM FOR YEARS.
KILL ANYTHING WITH A WEAPON. SEIZE THE REST.
OH! SPARE US! WE ARE BUT INNOCENT DROIDS! WE KNOW NOTHING OF CRIME!
BLEEEP
QUITE! YES! WE WERE JUST DOING WHAT WE WERE TOLD!
IT'S POSSIBLE A FEW HIGH-RANKING PERPETRATORS MAY HAVE SLIPPED THE NET--

--BUT ALL IN ALL? A SATISFACTORY END TO A LENGTHY INVESTIGATION.
SHOOT THE RING-LEADERS.
AND, IF I MAY SAY SO, A PRIZE MORE THAN WORTH THE LOSS OF SOME MOTHBALLED BAD SCIENCE.
ALL RIGHT, MA'AM--IT'S COMING ONLINE NOW...
WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE, SIR? SHE HAD THAT MICRO-TRACKER YOU HAD US FOLLOWING.
WAIT, YOU BUGGED M--
SHOULD WE RUN BIOMETRICS?
NO. SHE'S ALREADY IN THE SYSTEM. PUT HER IN SHUTTLE SIX, WITH THE LOW-RISKERS FROM THE HIVEBASE WRECKAGE.
UNDER WHAT NAME, SIR?
CHEVRON. JOYSTICK CHEVRON.
SHE'S A NOBODY.

AAAND WE'RE IN! ACCESSING THE DATA CORE NOW. LET'S SEE HERE...
HUH. WHAT'S THIS...?

SAY, UH-- WHERE ARE YOU SENDING ME, OH NEEDLESSLY COLD IMPERIAL TYRANT?
STRAIGHT TO HELL, CRIMINAL. YOU'RE GOING TO ACCRESKER JAIL.

BLEEEP
YES, BEETEE. I CONFESS I AM PERHAPS JUST A LITTLE...GIDDY... IT'S BEEN SO AWFULLY LONG.
VERY WELL. LET US PROCEED. I'D ASK THAT YOU TRANSMIT THE MEMORIES TO ME DIRECTLY, PLEASE, THE VERY MOMENT THEY'RE ACCESSED.

ACCRESKER?
BUT...DON'T THEY SAY THE PROBABILITY OF SURVIVAL THERE IS SO LOW IT--
--MIGHT AS WELL BE NONEXISTENT. YES. NOW FIND A SPACE AMONG THE OTHER WORMS AND ENJOY THE RIDE.

"DEAR USER, THESE FILES ARE ENCRYPTED. TO UNLOCK THEM, PLEASE DEPOSIT THE FOLLOWING SUM IN AN UNTRACEABLE BANK ACCOUNT, WITH--"

HUH. LOW PROBABILITY, Y'SAY?

COULD BE WORSE.
I BELIEVE I CAN SMELL THE COLOR OF TOMORROW YES YES I SMELL FREEDOM OHHH
BLEEP
...
WH--
WHAT, AH... WHAT PRECISELY...DO YOU MEAN...BEETEE... WHEN YOU SAY THAT THE FILE IS...AH...
"ENCRYPTED"...?
♫

DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think – and we want to hear from you! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com if you want to make it onto a future letters page. Don't forget to mark the letter "OKAY TO PRINT."